Uniform licensing regime

227. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that TRAI has recommended for unified licensing regime;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether is it also a fact that cellular operators are opposing to unified license regime;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether unified licence does not make infructuous the on-going battle of the limited mobility service while TDSAT's Judgement is awaited; and

(f) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, *inter-alia*, based on the recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), an addendum to New Telecom Policy-1999 (NTP-99) has been issued in November, 2003, to provide for the following categories of licences for Telecommunication services.

(i) Unified Licence for Telecommunication Services permitting Licensee to provide all Telecommunication/Telegraph services covering various geographical areas using any technolgy;

(ii) Licence for Unified Access (Basic and Cellular) Services permittig Licensee to provide Basic and/or Cellular Services using any technology in a defined service area.

The said addendum and guidelines for Unified Access (Basic and Cellular) Services Licence have also been put up on DoT website http.//:www.dotindia.com. Unified Access Services Licence allows an operator to provide Access services using wireline as well as wireless.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) to (f) After announcement of the Guidelines permitting Limited Mobile facility to the Basic Service Operators in 2001, the Cellular Operators had challenged the policy in the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) and the matter was further taken up to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court had remanded the case back to TDSAT. The Government stand was upheld by TDSAT in their majority judgement in August, 2003. The Cellular Operators have appealed against the said TDSAT judgement in the Supreme Court. Further, with the recent announcement of the policy of Unified Access Services Licence, some Cellular Operators and their Association have challenged the policy and have linked the issue with the above said matter in the Supreme Court. Cellular Operators have prayed before the Supreme Court to direct Department of Telecommunications to maintain status-quo throughout India as on the date of the judgement of the TDSAT (8.8.2003) regarding the number and type of Cellular Mobile Licences used separately or included alongwith any other type of licence. As such, the matter is presently subjudice.

However, at the same time, some of the existing Cellular operators, namely M/s Bharti Cellular Limited and M/s Hutchison Essar South Limited have applied for grant of Unified Access Services Licences. As on 30-11-2003, letters of Intent have been issued to M/s Bharti Cellular Limited for grant of the said Licences for 5 Service areas.

Out of Order telephones in Himachal Pradesh

228. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that most of the telephones under Jaisinghpur Exchange in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh remain out of order and no action is taken to set them right in spite of repeated complaints lodged in this regard;

(b) the number of complaints received from January, 2003 to date and the time taken by Government to put these telephones in order; and

(c) the reasons for delay in this behalf?